

Fiscal Year 2004

Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Report

This report is a condensed summary of the Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District's activities for fiscal year 2004 which covers the period from July 1, 2003, through June 30, 2004.

The Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a governmental subdivision of the State of North Carolina and is governed by a five-member Board, three of whom are elected and two appointed. North Carolina law charges them with the responsibility of planning and carrying out conservation activities that will best conserve the natural resources of Catawba County. They meet monthly, usually the first Tuesday evening, on the third floor of the Agricultural Resources Center in the District/Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Newton. All meetings are open to the public.

Current members of the District board are Charles Wike, Chairman; Worth Killian, Vice-Chairman; Gene Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer; James L. Hardin, Member; and William Ray Henderson, Member. The Conservation Services Supervisor is Larry Williams and the Office Support Specialist is Nancy Smyre.

The District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service in cooperation with other local, state, and federal agencies are working to promote conservation and the wise use of our natural resources. Together they offer a wide range of programs, both technical and in some cases financial assistance for the installation and maintenance of conservation practices.

N.C. AGRICULTURAL COST SHARE PROGRAM

This is the fifteenth year the Catawba SWCD has administered the North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program (NCACSP).

This program is intended to reduce the input of sediments, nutrients, animal wastes and pesticides (**agricultural nonpoint source pollution**) into the watercourses of our state

The cost-share program helps agricultural producers improve their level of on-farm management through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs). These include vegetative, structural or management systems that are used to improve the efficiency of farming operations by reducing potential pollutants into surface water. Popular BMPs offered include strip cropping, animal waste management systems, poultry composters, stream crossings, spring developments, and cropland conversion. An agricultural producer participating in this program will be reimbursed by the State for 75% of the average cost of each BMP installed. The remaining 25% of the cost is the responsibility of the producer. A new provision of the cost-share program has been introduced for new or limited resource farms that can cost-share up to 90% of the cost to install practices to improve water quality coming from agricultural activity in Catawba County. As a condition for cost sharing, a producer must agree to soil test and test animal wastes on certain practices.

The Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District receives, reviews, and approves all applications, conservation plans, and requests for payment.

Since October, 1989, \$1,149,604.00 has been allocated to Catawba County through the NCACSP. The planned BMP's save 8,978.83 tons per year of soil, and exclude more than 7,780 cattle and over 450 goats from free roam of the streams. More than 395,000 chickens were accounted for in poultry waste utilization plans, which are used in conjunction with composters.

NORTH CAROLINA AG COST-SHARE PRACTICES

BELOW: Stock Trails for cattle



LEFT: Livestock Watering
Facilities

RIGHT: LIVESTOCK EXCLUSION FROM
STREAMS



A summary of results of the Program Year 2004 work toward improving water quality is:

- \$ 57,461.00 contracted
- 4 State approved conservation plans
- 2 Spring/Well Developments
- 1 Stream Crossings
- 1 Cropland Conservation
- 6 Watering tanks
- 365 Acres Affected
- 3,266 tons of soil loss reduction

On May 5, 2004, Supervisors Worth Killian, Charles Wike, James Hardin, and Ray Henderson along with District staff Larry William, Nancy Smyre, and NRCS Rick Grant conducted a spot-check on the farms of JD Little, David Little, John Rector, Worth Killian and Harold Sigmon. Practices spot-checked included water tanks, pads, well and fencing, cropland conversions, and stream crossings.

2004 NRCS Annual Report

Catawba County, North Carolina

I proudly present this 2004 USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) annual report to you. We continue to make significant strides towards protecting our state's natural resources.

Passage of the 2002 Farm Bill greatly increased funding for conservation programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Farmland Protection Program (FPP), the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

NRCS employees work in every county of the state. We are committed to helping our clients achieve their resource goals through a voluntary, incentive-based approach to land stewardship. This is the foundation of our conservation programs and each year's gains take us closer to our objective of maintaining a productive land in harmony with a quality environment.

Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

In FY-2004, the conservation partnership in Catawba County assisted over 400 land users, consultants, and units of government with solving natural resource problems. Over 1000 acres of Cropland had one or more Conservation Systems planned, and almost 450 acres of Pastureland had one or more Conservation Systems planned. There 865 acres of Grazing Land that had one or more Conservation Systems Applied. Our programs reduced soil erosion on Catawba lands by almost 4,000 tons.

Conservation Practice	Planned	Applied
Access Road	2350 ft	
Animal Trail and Walkway	370 ft	1270 ft
Conservation Cover	43 ac	42 ac
Conservation Crop Rotation	779 ac	120 ac
Critical area Planting	5 ac	
Fence	33655 ft	10705 ft
Field Border	13300 ft	
Forage Management	31 ac	
Forest Stand Improvement	161 ac	
Grade Stabilization Structures		3
Heavy Use Area Protection	14 ac	10 ac
Dead Poultry Incinerators	3	
Long Term No-till		146 ac
Nutrient Management	468 ac	530 ac
Pasture Planting	16 ac	16 ac
Pest Management	439 ac	510 ac
Pipeline for Watering Systems	13865 ft	7417 ft
Prescribed Forest Burning	42 ac	
Prescribed Grazing	468 ac	541 ac
Crop Residue Management	151 ac	39 ac
Crop Residue Management (Seasonal)	661 ac	96 ac
Roof Runoff Structures	6	
Stream Crossing of Farm Use	1	1
Tree Establishment	162 ac	162 ac
Underground Outlet	80 ft	80 ft
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management	109 ac	109 ac
Animal Waste Storage Facilities	3	2
Animal Water Well's	4	3
Animal Watering Facilities	17	15

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)

There are 10 RC&D areas covering 62 counties in North Carolina.

Carolina Land & Lakes RC&D serves, Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Lincoln and Iredell counties in the foothills of Piedmont North Carolina. The office is located in Conover, just off I-40 at the Fairgrove Church Road exit.

Several projects are in the works or being proposed in Catawba County and include: a greenway project along the Henry River between the Hickory Soccer complex and Old Shelby Road; a 319 project behind Catawba Hospital on a critically eroding area; we have been exploring the potential for “Canoe Paddle Trails” on both the Henry and Jacob Fork Rivers, which would provide recreational, economic, and water quality benefits; and we are exploring the possibility of a 319 project for Clarks Creek to address urban runoff.



‘Paddlers” getting started



**A view of the Jacob Fork
River below the Old Shelby
Road bridge.**

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Catawba County has had over the past 20 years about 4,005 acres enrolled in CRP and the Continuous CRP programs. About one half of the acres are planted to trees the other to grass. There are currently 58 contracts active, on 1312.9 acres, with annual payments totaling \$53,511. Over the ten year life of these 58 contracts this amounts to \$530,511. CRP removes highly erodible cropland from production and established either a vegetative cover or trees. The Continuous CRP program promotes the installation of buffers along streams in the watersheds by providing technical and cost-share assistance.



Left: trees being planted on marginal pastureland



Below: Continuous CRP buffer planted in trees with fencing.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible National goals. Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land. Through five to 10 year contracts, USDA may cost share up from 50 to 90 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices, depending upon eligibility.

EQIP Sign up		Applications Received	Applications Funded	Dollars Cost Shared
1	June 12- July 11, 1997	18	7	\$ 21446
2	April 1, 1997- May 15, 1998	133	30	\$ 64589
3	Oct 1, 1998 - March 12, 1999	19	19	\$ 82743
4	March 14, 1999- April 14, 2000	4	3	\$ 45871
5	April 14, 2000- March 20, 2001	7	1	\$ 1458
6	March 20, 2001- March 10, 2002	24	11	\$ 23048
7	March 10, 2002- Sept 30, 2002	3	3	\$ 54770
8	Sept 30, 2002- March 15, 2003	95	2	\$ 102206
9	March 15, 2003-March 30, 2004	4	4	\$ 98731
TOTALS		307	80	\$ 494862

North Carolina received \$ 10 million in EQIP funds for 2004. In Catawba County there were 5 applications for cost share assistance on practices ranging from dead poultry incinerators, poultry litter storage facilities, wells, water tanks, access roads, All eligible applications are scored and ranked after conservation plans and estimated cost share amounts was calculated. Four applications were selected for funding, allocating \$98731 in cost share funds to active farms in Catawba County.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)



Top left: Horse manure compost, heavy use areas

Top right: water tank, heavy use area

Left: poultry incinerator

Lower left: Poultry Litter Storage Facility

Lower right: Horse Manure Composter



Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

Since 1998, there have been four WHIP program contracts developed in Catawba County. In 2002, two of those were cancelled by the landowner. The two remaining contracts provide habitat and habitat improvement to 12 acres and received cost sharing of \$18990.



Shallow water impoundment for wildlife

The state priorities for WHIP include conservation of native grasslands and fire maintained forest habitats, to aid declining populations of Bobwhite quail and other grass and shrub habitat breeding birds. This past year, WHIP has helped the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission implement a *Cooperative Upland (Habitat) Restoration and Enhancement* (CURE) on carefully selected private wildlife management cooperatives. The WHIP partnership with CURE leverages valuable contributions from the state and private sector and is producing important benefits for wildlife.

The conservation practices most commonly utilized in WHIP agreements include: prescribed burning, developing and managing early succession habitat, and controlling livestock access to wildlife habitat development areas.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The 2004 Annual Awards Banquet was held on Thursday, January 29 at the First United Methodist Church in Newton. The Parker Sunday School Class from the church provided the meal for 130 persons. Gene Wilson served as Master of Ceremonies and the Rev. James Zimmerman, interim Pastor at St. James Lutheran Church in Newton, gave the invocation.

Door prizes were provided by ABC Florist, Claremont Wholesale Building Supply, Hawksridge Nursery, Killian's Inc., Mt. View Home & Garden Center, Inc., Geppetto's Pizza, and Tractor and Equipment Company. Carolina Farm Credit Service made a monetary contribution.

The topic for the 2004 Contests was "Soil and Water, Yours For Life." Ten students participated in the Public Speaking Contests -- Four in the Seventh Grade Contest and six in the Eighth Grade. Judges for the various contests were: PUBLIC SPEAKING - 8th Grade - Gail Page, Shelby; Jerry Dorsett, Winston-Salem; and Ralston James, Mooresville. 7th Grade - Patty Dellinger, Lincolnton; Carl Beam, Lincoln County; and Wendell Kirkham, Taylorsville.

ESSAY - 6th grade - Bobbi Beard, Newton; Margaret Dixon, Newton; and Howard Reinhardt, Newton. POSTER - Robin Howard, Newton and Charles Wike, Catawba.

Winners in the various contests included:

EIGHTH GRADE PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST: Sarah Austin, Jacobs Fork Middle School, first place; Elizabeth Seitz, Arndt Middle, second; and Sabra Hart, Mill Creek Middle, third. Honorable mention went to Meredith Templeton, Grandview Middle; Damian Blankenship, Hickory Day; and Natalie Jensen, Concordia Lutheran. SEVENTH GRADE PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST: Ethan Hefner, Jacobs Fork Middle, first place; Brandon Hall, Arndt Middle, second; and Chet Sigmon, Mill Creek Middle, third. Honorable mention went to Joseph Garvey, Concordia Lutheran.

SIXTH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST: Amanda Young, Catawba Intermediate, first place; Lauren Barkley, Clyde Campbell Elementary, second place; and Madisen Forehand, Concordia Lutheran, third place.

FIFTH GRADE POSTER CONTEST: Jeremiah Pittman, Startown Elementary, first place; Jason Gardner, Claremont

Elementary, second place; and Kortney Mahoney, Startown Elementary, third place.

SIXTH GRADE POSTER CONTEST: Jamie Iovino, St. Stephens Elementary, first place; Mallory Benner, Catawba Intermediate, second place; and Destiny Towery, Mt. View Elementary, third place.

In addition to the representatives from school administrative systems, schools, parents and grandparents, the NC Commissioner of Labor Cherie Berry, State Senator Austin Allran, and Catawba County Commissioner Barbara Beatty were in attendance. The banquet was ended at 8:45 pm.

AREA CONTESTS

On Tuesday, March 16, 2004, at 6:00 pm during the Area II Contest Night at the Surry County Government Center in Dobson, the Catawba District placed as follows:

8th GRADE PUBLIC SPEAKING: Sarah Austin, daughter of Steve and Hannah Austin of Hickory, and a student at Jacobs Fork Middle School, received second place. Her teachers at Jacobs Fork were Marjorie Pence and Lee Robins.

7th GRADE PUBLIC SPEAKING: Ethan Hefner, son of Greg and Lynn Hefner of Newton of Hickory and a student at Jacobs Fork Middle School, received third place. His speech teacher at Jacob Forks Middle School was Beth Roland.

6th GRADE ESSAY: Amanda Young, daughter of George and Mary Beth Young of Newton and a student of Tammy Conaway and Diana Dagenhart at Catawba Intermediate, received honorable mention in the thirteen-county Area 2 competition for her essay.

6th GRADE POSTER: Jamie Iovino, daughter of Frank and Debbie Iovino of Hickory, received second place. Her teacher at St. Stephens Elementary was Tanya Mikeal.

5th GRADE POSTER: Jeremiah Pittman, son of Brannon and Beverley Pittman of Newton received Honorable Mention. His teacher at Startown Elementary was Pamela Saine.

Attending the Contest Night event from Catawba County were Nancy Smyre and numerous family members, friends and teachers of the contestants.

First place winners received a medallion and \$50; second place a medallion and \$25; third place a medallion and \$15; and honorable mention a certificate.

STATE CONTEST

Winners in the State Public Speaking Contest in Raleigh in May 2004, were Gloria Arizpe, Area 4, Wilson SWCD in the 7th Grade Contest and Mollie Richardson, Area 3, Moore SWCD in the 8th Grade Contest. Second place in the 7th Grade Contest was Candence Railsback, Area 1, Jackson SWCD and in the 8th Grade Contest was Emily Bridges, Area 2, Alleghany SWCD. First place winners received \$200 and a plaque and second place received \$100 and a plaque. The Contest was held in the ground floor hearing room of the Archdale Building.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS WEEK

Environmental Awareness Week (EAW) Field Days were held at Southside Park in Newton on Tuesday, September 9, and Thursday, September 11, 2003. Fifth graders from Banoak Elementary, Thornton Elementary and Engelmann School of the Arts and Sciences attended on Tuesday. On Thursday students from South Newton Elementary attended, but Shuford Elementary in Conover did not make it. Approximately 240 students attended the event this year. This was the twenty-third EAW Field Days Event co-sponsored by the District and the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service 4-H.

Workshop leaders were: Forestry - David Wright and Derek Arney, N. C. Forest Service; Wildlife - Jack Mason and Chad Martin, N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission; Water - Larry Williams, Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District; Bees - Bobby Glenn, Alton Johnston, Sylvia King, and Gerald Null, Catawba Valley Beekeepers Association; Animals - Susie Devine, 4-H Livestock Club Leader and Jeff Carpenter, Cooperative Extension Service; Food, Land and People - Lea-Ann Branch, Burke Soil & Water Conservation District and Pam Hamby, Caldwell SWCD; Soils - David Knight, Burke County Soil Survey Office. Groundwater - Peggy Finley Chuck Pippin, and Andrew Pitness, NCDENR, Division of Water Quality. This was the first year that the Catawba County Landfill participated with Beverly Hester and Amanda Kain

presenting the workshop. Donna Mull and Nancy Smyre also assisted.

Lunch for the workshop leaders was provided by the District from Little Pig's Barbecue on Tuesday and at Geppeto's Pizza on Thursday.

News Media covering this event included **HICKORY DAILY RECORD, OBSERVER-NEWS-ENTERPRISE, Radio Station WNNC and Prime Cable of Hickory.**

Ray Henderson received the EAW Proclamation at the September 2, 2003, Catawba County Commissioners meeting.

AREA ENVIROTHON

The Northwest Envirothon was held on April 1, 2004, at the Edwin H. McGee Natural Resources Conservation Center on Fairplains Road in Wilkesboro. Catawba had five teams participating -- **High School Competition** - two teams from Fred T. Foard High School, Tigers 2 members Leigha Dickens, James Puckett, Tori Andrews, Aaron Sherrill, Jimmy Crutchfield and Tigers 1 members Carissa Simmons, Panhia Yang, Midoua Xiong, Courtney Butler, Tiffany Ellis, with advisors Carol Foote and Pat Hayes. The Tigers 2 team came in fourth place and Tigers 1 came in seventh place allowing both teams to advanced to the State Envirothon. There were eleven high school teams participating. **Middle School Competition** - There were four teams competing - Grandview Middle School Eagles members Davis Perkins, Sara Phillips, Ricky Paul, Myles Beauleiu, Bill Mallett with advisor Mary Ann Upton. They placed second. Grandview Eagle Talons members Ryan Richardson, Sarah Hart, Kayla Dula, Alex Wilson, Kevin Conley placed tenth with advisor Diane Owens. Jacobs Fork Middle School Jaguars members Hunter Whittington, Matthew Trexler, Sabina Rumswinkel, Katherine Penley, Taylor Lassiter with advisors Mary Phillips and Beth Roland. They placed eighth. Catawba Intermediate Dragons members Jay Young, Carrie Perrigan, Chelsea Lineberger, Tyler Potter, Dylan Brown with advisor Diana Dagenhart. This team, which was made up of all sixth graders placed twenty-ninth out of thirty-nine middle school teams participating. Seven teams advanced to state competition from each division. Catawba County had two high school teams (from Foard) and two middle school teams (Grandview Middle and Jacobs Fork Middle) at the State Envirothon April 23 and 24 at Cedarock Park in Alamance County.

Local sponsors for the Northwest Envirothon included Carolina Bottling Company and Papa Johns Pizza of Hickory

The winning teams received \$200 to help on their trip to the State Envirothon in Burlington on April 23, 2004

The Envirothon program is a competitive event for five member high school teams to compete in a natural resources knowledge and ecology field day. It stimulates, reinforces and enhances students interest in the environment and our states natural resources. Resource subject areas are: Soils, Forestry, Wildlife, Aquatics, and Current Environmental Issues.

STATE ENVIROTHON

The State Envirothon was held at Cedarock Park near Burlington, NC on Friday and Saturday, April 23 and 24, 2004.

With 31 middle schools competing, Jacobs Fork came in 23rd place, Grandview Middle came in 7th.

With 46 teams competing, the Fred T. Foard Teams came in 24th and 39th place in the high school competition.

The first place middle school team was a Wilson County Home School team and the first place high school team was an Orange County Home School team.

NATIONAL ENVIROTHON

The 17th Annual Canon Envirothon was won by a Miami, Florida team, on July 31, 2004, at Wesleyan College in Buckannon, West Virginia. Virginia was second, New Jersey third, Kentucky fourth and North Carolina fifth. There were 52 teams from across the U.S. and Canada participating.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION WORKSHOP

At the August 5, 2003, monthly board meeting the 2003 Resource Conservation Workshop delegate Jama Holloman gave a favorable report on the workshop. She had constructed a display showing various conservation practices and subjects taught at the workshop.

David K. Johnson, a Sophomore at Fred T. Foard High

School, was selected by the Board to attend the 40th Resource Conservation Workshop in Raleigh on the campus of NC State University June 27 - July 2, 2004. David is the son of David and Tresa Johnson of Vale.

SOIL STEWARDSHIP WEEK

The Soil and Water Stewardship Week proclamation was received by Ray Henderson at the April 19, 2004, Catawba County Commissioners' Meeting in Catawba at the Sherrill Tobacco Company. The ELCA Lutheran Synod's Weekly E-News advised all the churches in North Carolina of the Soil and Water Stewardship Week web site. The Theron Rankin Baptist Association in Hickory was also notified. They serve 44 churches in this area. Other dominations were also advised of the web site.

MINI-COURSE ON COUNTY GOVERNMENT

At noon on Tuesday, March 30, 2004, the Catawba SWCD was host to the Mini-Course on County Government. Over twenty county employees attended. Larry explained conservation practices with a slide set and Nancy described the educational programs of the District and also told some of the history beginning with Hugh Hammond Bennett before a Senate Committee in Washington, DC in March 1935.

FARM-CITY

Several Farm-City Committee Meetings were attended by Worth Killian and Nancy Smyre. Vicky Collins of Carolina Farm Credit chaired the committee. Al Yountz, a motivational humorist, was the guest speaker for the Farm-City Dinner on November 25, 2003. Clarence Hood received the Hickory Kiwanis Club's Outstanding Contributor to Agriculture Award.

AREA 2 COORDINATORS CHANGE

Marlene Salyer's last day with the Division of Soil and Water Conservation was November 7, 2003. Steve Ferguson was selected to be the Area 2 Coordinator as of April 19, 2004.

MEETINGS ATTENDED

Larry Williams attended the RC&D meeting on the 319

project on the Clark Creek Watershed and another meeting on the canoe trails.

Nancy Smyre attended the Catawba County Planning Department's Workshop/Visual presentation by Mr. Randall Arendt. Mr. Arendt is a land-use planner, site designer, lecturer, and an advocate of "conservation planning."

Charles Wike and Worth Killian attended a called meeting of Area 2 Supervisors in Wilkesboro on September 23 concerning realignment of the soil and water areas.

Attending the Area 2 Fall Meeting on October 9 at the Caldwell County Agriculture Fairgrounds in Lenoir, were Supervisors Worth Killian, James Hardin, and Ray Henderson, Mae Killian, Nancy Smyre, and Larry Williams.

The SEDEA Meeting in Pigeon Forge, TN, November 11-13, was attended by Nancy Smyre, Iredell Secretary Jeanie Murdock, Lincoln Secretary Patty Dellinger and Technician Rick McSwain. This was the most successful Conference and the highest attendance ever with 112 attending. The President is Tommy Brooks from Lee County. Ms. Joyce Fidler, Southern Grove, Newton, donated gloves for the participants.

On December 4, the secretary attended an Area Education/Envirothon meeting in Wilkesboro, and again on February 11. She attended the 60th Annual Meeting of the NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts January 4-6, 2004, in Raleigh. Area Contest Night was attended by Nancy on March 16 along with Catawba County participants, parents, teachers, and friends.

The Area 2 Spring Meeting at the King American Legion Building in Stokes County in on March 11 was attended by Charles Wike, Ray Henderson, James Hardin, and Nancy Smyre.

The Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District would like to thank the following for their cooperation in promoting soil and water conservation and the protection of our natural resources: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Consolidated Farm Service Agency, NC Cooperative Extension Service, Rural Economic & Community Development Service, NC Department of Environment, Health & Natural Resources, NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation, NC Forest Service, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, and various other agencies in our area.